

Eleven interns graduate from DLA Corporate Intern Program

By Jessica Walter, APR, DDC Command Affairs

Eleven employees from the supply, contracting and information technology career fields graduated from the Defense Logistics Agency Corporate Intern Program during a ceremony held on the Defense Distribution Center installation in New Cumberland, Pa., Jan. 16.

“Today, we recognize an important program that is a key contributor to one of DLA’s Four Primary Focus Areas – Growth and Development,” said DDC Commander Army Brig. Gen. Lynn A. Collyar during the ceremony.

“The DLA Corporate Intern Program is a tremendous opportunity to shape the workers of today into the leaders of tomorrow,” Collyar continued.

The two-year DLA Corporate Intern Program is designed to train entry-level personnel for subsequent advancement in various DLA career fields including supply, information technology, contracting, property disposal, accounting, environmental, and quality assurance.

During the program, the interns participated in rotational assignments, cross training, on-the-job assignments and formal training – experiences the graduates considered instrumental in the enrichment of their careers at DLA.

“The program has allowed me to see how DLA works as a whole, and how what we do fits into DLA’s overall mission,” said IT intern Mike Sohomuch.

Fellow IT intern Justin Drawbaugh agreed. “I now have a better vision of DLA and our mission and goals after two years of being an intern. The program was a wonderful experience for me.”

“The overall design of the DLA Corporate Intern Program showed me the big picture of DLA and our impact on the war fighter,” said supply intern Joe Rutkowski.

“This helped us better understand the

customer, the enterprise, and work with the other areas more effectively,” added IT intern Vincent Blackwell.

According to the interns, they were not only impressed by the program’s ability to show them how each part of the enterprise operated, but also in the rewarding opportunities they received.

For many of the supply interns, their work on the Swarm project to improve inventory accuracy at Defense Distribution Depot Warner Robins, Ga., is most memorable because of the tremendous impact they were able to make on DDWG’s capability to support America’s war fighters.

“My most meaningful accomplishment is participating in the Swarm project in Warner Robins, Ga. It was an extraordinary learning experience that helped me understand the hard work and the important mission of all the men and women working at DDC distribution centers,” said supply intern Alex Ramirez.

“I enjoyed having the opportunity to learn while making a positive impact at the same time,” said supply intern Shannon Fry of the Swarm project.

Jose Abreu, also a supply intern, said working on the Swarm project at DDWG

gave him valuable insight. “I was directly involved in the mission and was able to see first hand one critical aspect of the supply chain.”

Supply intern Shannon Lukins found contributing to an effective team to be her most rewarding experience during her time in the program. “I am very proud of being a part of the many daily activities and challenges faced by my team and having the opportunity to contribute. Knowing that you have the opportunity to affect a much greater challenge is rewarding.”

Collyar urged the graduates to embrace the job satisfaction DLA employment provides. “If we look at our ultimate customer as the Soldier, Airman, Sailor, or Marine that may be in a combat zone, that should be all the motivation any of us needs to work as hard as we can to ensure that they are fully supported. It’s a very solidifying mission.”

Contracting intern Cheley Auguste shared Collyar’s sentiment. “It is a good feeling knowing that we are supporting the war fighters, and there is nothing more important and rewarding than that.”

Laura Fritz, supply intern, was part of a team that traveled to Kuwait to do an



DLA Corporate Intern Graduates, back row (left to right): Mike Sohomuch, Vincent Blackwell, Justin Drawbaugh, Jose Abreu, Joe Rutkowski, and Alex Ramirez. Front row (left to right): Shannon Fry, Cheley Auguste, DDC Commander Army Brig. Gen. Collyar, Laura Fritz, and Shannon Lukins. Not pictured: Lynn Robertson.

assessment of DSS, DDC's warehousing and transportation system. "It was an amazing experience that put me face-to-face with DLA's customers and gave me an appreciation for the struggles an austere environment creates," she said. "Being that close to the war fighters made me realize the importance of having the right item at the right place at the right time."

Defense Training Center - Columbus Career Program Branch Chief Pam Latker who oversees the Corporate Intern Program addressed the graduates during the ceremony, commending them on their accomplishments. "You have stepped up to the challenge with an eagerness to learn, a thirst for knowledge, and a commitment to the enterprise. You now have the skills necessary to function in an integrated logistics environment," said Latker.

Latker also posed a challenge to each of the graduates: "Look up, look forward, and look ahead – because that's where you're headed."

IT intern Lynn Robertson found DLA's commitment to the program encouraging. "The Corporate Intern Program is one bit of evidence of how much DLA is willing to invest in the future and the continued success of the organization."

Lukins commended DDC Intern Program Manager Mike Hasuga for his role in the professional development of each DDC intern. "He has encouraged us to challenge our strengths both in the classroom and on the job. He has been both a professional sounding board and a source of sage advice."

Blackwell was impressed by "the excellent educational opportunities, the exceptional level of command interest and support, and the chance to make so many contacts throughout the organization."

Abreu considered the program to be "one of the best educational and professional opportunities available." He added, "Without any doubts, I would definitely do it all over again."

Robertson added, "I would highly recommend an internship to anyone interested in pursuing a career with DLA."

DDSP offers on-the-floor experience to exchange participants

By Sherre Mitten-Bell, DDSP Public Affairs

The first three participants in the Defense Logistics Agency/Defense Distribution Center Exchange Program experienced first-hand the operations at the distribution center level where supplies for war fighters are received, stored, and shipped around the globe.

The ideal site for these employees to see the mission outside an office was on-the-floor at the Defense Distribution Depot Susquehanna, Pa., DLA's largest strategic distribution platform.

Part of the experience for Renea Burns, Valli Lampkin, and Stephanie Easter was walking for miles in their safety shoes through the 1.7 million square-foot Eastern Distribution Center, and its other associated warehouses.

After receiving a command and safety overview Nov. 13, they spent the next day studying operation processes in Receiving. They also spent a day each in Stow and Pick, Transportation and Systems/Planning to round out their first week in the program. Their final week will be spent with the DDC Headquarters staff at New Cumberland.

The three employees were impressed with the scope of work involved in the distribution process and grateful to see

exactly how their jobs relate and support the workforce at the distribution center.

"People appear as numbers in statistics, then you see what they do each day and they become real," said Easter, who works for the Resources and Requirements Office.

Lampkin, who works for the DLA Transportation Policy Office, found that seeing the policy and procedures executed at the ground level was helpful.

"Book knowledge is good, but seeing the process in place was impressive," she said.

"Materiel appears as numbers in statistics but once you physically see the amount of frustrated stock and amount of returning retrograde materiel from Southwest Asia it becomes real, especially when my objective is to assist the military services in supporting the BRAC mandate by reducing the inventory stored within the DLA depots," said Burns, who works in the DLA Materiel Accountability and Distribution Policy Office.

All three agreed that the experience was well worth the walking required and are thankful to everyone who exchanged information and shared time with them along their way.



Three employees from Defense Logistics Agency Headquarters received first-hand experience of how their jobs impacts employees at the depot level through the DLA and Defense Distribution Center exchange program. Pictured, from left to right, are Renea Burns, Valli Lampkin and Stephanie Easter.